THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU): (a) and (b) The matter regarding appointment of MPs as Chairpersons of District Rural Development Agencies is under consideration.

Supply of Drinking Water to AP and Orissa

1910. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state the details of arrangements made for the adequate supply of drinking water and fodder in the drought affected areas of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa this year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (DR. (SHRIMATI) RITA VERMA): State Governments take up relief work to mitigate drought situation, *inter-alia,* which includes making arrangements for drinking water supply and fodder in drought affected areas of the State. Government of India supplements their efforts to mitigate the problem. After the current monsoon, Government of Andhra Pradesh has reported deficient rainfall in some parts of the State leading to drought situation, whereas in Orissa, flood has been reported in major parts of the State.

As per the information furnished by the Government of Andhra Pradesh, State Government has made arrangements during this year for drinking water supply in drought affected areas by making special arrangements to attend to operation and maintenance of water supply systems, drilling of new tube wells, deepening of bore wells, augmentation of piped water supply schemes, flushing of bore wells, extraction of pipelines, repair of water supply schemes, transportation of water, etc. Keeping in view the deficient rainfall due to which less area was sown with fodder yielding crops. State Government has taken steps for supply of fodder and cattle feed in affected districts.

In case of Orissa, as reported by the State Government, to combat drought situation in the affected districts of State, last year "Operation Trishna" was launched to meet drinking water scarcity in

the drought affected districts. Activities included installation of new tube wells, completion of on-going rural water supply schemes, repair of handpumps, deployment of vans for maintenance of tube wells, supply through tankers, distribution of water through installation of plastic moulded tanks, etc. Regarding supply of fodder to drought affected areas of Orissa, State Government distributed 1,250 MT cattle feed in drought affected areas of the State.

Anomaly in distribution of Central funds to States

1911. SHRI A. VUAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that States performing poorly are receiving large Central funds even though they are not able to respond to the Central assistance with their own matching grants;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the poverty indicators show further deterioration in these States;

(c) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to rectify the anomaly?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU): (a) In case States fail to contribute their share, an amount corresponding to the shortfall is deducted by the Ministry of Rural Development from the Central funds at the time of release of subsequent instalment.

(b) to (d) The percentage of rural poor in the country has been estimated to have declined to 27.07% in 1999-2000 from 37.27% in the year 1993-94.